Minutes
Community Choices Facilitation Committee
May 15, 2008

The committee held its first meeting at the Town Room, Town Hall. The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m.

Isaac Ben Ezra, Katherine Vorwerk Feldman, Stanley Gawle, Gerald Jolly, Janet Lansberry, Irvin Rhodes, Bob Saul, Richard Spurgin, Alison Donta-Venman, and Martha Hanner were present from the committee, as was Andrew Steinberg, Budget Coordinating Group liaison to the committee.

Brian Morton (BCG co-chair and Finance Committee Chair), John Musante(Assistant Town Manager and Treasurer), Jere Hochman (Superintendant) , Andy Churchill (School Committee Chair) , Bonnie Isman (Library Director), Larry Shaffer (Town Manger), and Walter Wolnik were also present.

Steinberg chaired the initial meeting at the request of the BCG and by agreement. Members of the committee introduced themselves and explained why they asked to be members. Morton, Musante, Churchill, Hochman, Isman and Shaffer introduced themselves and expressed their hope for the committee's success.

During the introductions, members related interest in long-term planning, helping the town to identify its goals, distinguishing "wants" from "needs", assuring that all possible revenue sources are assessed and considered, and that any plan is connected to values and based on guiding principles.

Steinberg, Morton and Musante presented the Budget Coordinating Group proposed process and the role envisioned for the committee, which led to the charge adopted by the Select Board. Topics discussed were the definition of terms used in the process design; whether a level-funded budget is a realistic "worst case" scenario; how to consider salaries, benefits, and unfunded liabilities; the structural deficit; how to engage the public; and the relationship between this process and the Master Planning Process.

The committee identified topics for its next meetings:
1. The Master Plan
2. How to conduct outreach and engage the public
3. Examples of similar efforts in other communities including a presentation by someone with expertise at community engagement
4. Consideration of how the committee will function – e.g., designation of subcommittees
5. What the committee needs to do to legitimize the community process
6. Identification of data that the committee needs

There was brief discussion of the Open Meeting Law.

The committee agreed that its next meeting will be at 9:00 am on May 21, 2008, that telephonic participation will be permissible if possible and necessary for a member to attend, and that the committee will try to establish a regular day to meet.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 am.

Andrew Steinberg, acting clerk